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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

RONNIE D. PETERSON
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

June 7, 2017

Chairman James Lower
State Representative, 70th District
State Capitol
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chairman Lower:

I write to you today to express my opposition to House Bills 4105 and 4334.

Michigan is a Welcoming State. We depend on immigrants to grow our economy and put Michigan on the world stage. Efforts like these, while on their face intended to support our system of laws, have instead a chilling and deleterious effect on our communities. First, they create an atmosphere in which immigrants continue to feel threatened and may seek alternative places to invest their dollars, expand their businesses and grow their families. More importantly, though, these bills create serious challenges to maintaining public safety in local communities – the exact opposite of their intent.

In many communities where immigrants congregate, local police rely heavily on personal relationships with community members to ensure that general public safety is maintained. Residents need to know that when they approach local police about issues unrelated to immigration (e.g. domestic violence, drug crimes, burglaries, etc.) they will not be put in jeopardy. Otherwise, they are likely to underreport violent crimes, which puts all of us at risk. These bills, if enacted, will have a deep chilling effect on the immigrant community and will make it harder for local units to maintain safety and security.

The federal government is responsible for enforcing federal immigration policy. I won't comment on their current intent. Locally, our job is to serve our residents by creating the safest environment for everyone. When local units determine that heightening enforcement of federal laws compromises their primary mission, they need the flexibility to direct their resources to more effective activities.

I urge the committee to reject these bills.

Sincerely,

Ronnie Peterson
State Representative, 54th District

